

Republic of the Philippines & United States

Exercise Magazine



FY06





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BILATERAL COOPERATION

U.S. Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Sailors of the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group successfully finished more than two weeks of ground, air and naval integration training with the Armed Forces of the Philippines Oct. 16 – Nov. 1, 2005.

The exercises, called Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX), improved interoperability, increased readiness and continued professional relationships between the United States and Philippine Armed Forces.

Approximately 5,000 U.S. and Philippine military personnel participated in the exercises.

“Bilateral exercises such as Talon Vision and PHIBLEX demonstrate to our leaders, our people and the international community that the U.S. Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are strong partners, not only in the defense of our countries, but also in the fight against terrorism,” Col. Walter L. Miller, Jr., U.S. Exercise Director.

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U.S. Marine Sgt. Maj. James R. McKay greets Philippine Marine Sgt. Jonathan S. Delgado during the opening ceremony for Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercises 2006, which are designed to improve interoperability, increase readiness and continue professional relationships between the U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

MANILA, Republic of the Philippines — Military commanders with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Amphibious Squadron-11 and the Armed Forces of the Philippines held an opening ceremony at the Marine Barracks here Oct. 14 marking the beginning of two-week-long exercises in the Philippines.



U.S. Navy Capt. Mark E. Donahue and Philippine Marine Maj. Bon Vibar have a discussion after the opening ceremony.

The bilateral training consists of two exercises, Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 2006. Approximately 4,500 Marines and Sailors with the Forward Deployed MEU and Amphibious Ready Group will train with the Philippine Air Force and Marine Corps.

The exercises are designed to improve interoperability, increase readiness and continue professional relationships between the U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces.

“Both our forces have numerous training objectives to accomplish and we’ll accomplish them together,” said Col. Walter L. Miller, Jr., the MEU’s commander. “Not only are we conducting events such as live fire training and amphibious landings, we will also conduct Medical and Engineering Civic Action Projects near our training areas.”



U.S. Marine Capt. Jennifer A. Mercer talks with a Philippine Marine at the opening ceremony.

Due to the MEU’s seven-month deployment to Iraq last year, PHIBLEX 2005 was canceled. This year, the exercise will equip both the U.S. and Philippine militaries with valuable experience.

The training evolutions, approved by both U.S. and Philippine governments, are not focused on current counterterrorism training in the Philippines. However, much of the training can be applied to continue the U.S. and Philippine alliance in the Global War on Terrorism.



Philippine Marines execute a free-fall jump from 9,999 feet in the air. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho



After inspecting and prepping their gear, Philippine Airmen wait to board a U.S. Marine KC-130 Hercules aircraft to execute a static-line jump from 1,250 feet in the air during the first bilateral training in Talon Vision. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

BY SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

CLARK AIR BASE, Republic of the Philippines

— In a simulated re-supply of food, fuel and other supplies, 29 U.S. and Philippine service members jumped off a U.S. Marine KC-130 Hercules aircraft with three palettes of cargo here Oct. 17.

Philippine Airmen, Marines, and U.S. Marines participated in the first bilateral training for Talon Vision 2006.

“This is a really good opportunity for our Marines to see how other jump units in foreign countries operate,” said Staff Sgt. Steven R. Parker, a platoon sergeant with Air Delivery Platoon, 3rd Air Delivery Company, 3rd Transportation Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group.

According to first-time jumper, Philippine Airman 1st Class Michael Abiera, para-rescue man, 505th Search and Rescue Group, it was a great learning experience for him to jump with Americans for the first time.

“Everyone experiences anxiety and fear, especially their first time,” said the 30-year-old Virginia Beach, Va. native Parker. “But once you jump and see your canopy it’s very exhilarating and an adrenaline rush. Then you can’t wait until your

next jump.”

“I now understand mental alertness better,” said Abiera. “Everything went real smooth, and I want to jump again.”

During the flight, nine U.S. Marines jumped out using static lines that auto-pull their parachutes at low-level altitudes. Ten airmen with 505th SRG also jumped using the static-line method. In order to maintain the simulated scenario, the jumpers dropped out of the Hercules at 1,250 feet for short air-to-ground time.

For the final evolution of the training, 10 Philippine force reconnaissance Marines performed free-fall jumps at 9,999 feet. It takes special certifications in order to free-fall. The max altitude for a free-fall jump is 30,000 feet. However, the jumpers would need oxygen to jump any higher than 10,000 feet.



A U.S. Marine KC-130 Hercules aircraft, with VMGR-152 Sumos, drops cargo during the first bilateral training in Talon Vision 2006. The simulated re-supply jump sent 29 service members and three palettes of cargo into a landing zone at Clark Air Base. Photo by Philippine Air Force Sgt. Ferdinand T. Balitaan

TALON VISION JUMPS OFF

*U.S., PHILIPPINE FORCES
LEAP INTO TRAINING*



A Philippine force reconnaissance Marine descends toward the ground after jumping 9,999 feet in the air. Photo by Philippine Air Force Sgt. Ferdinand T. Balitaan



U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jerry N. Smith inspects Lance Cpl. David A. Lopez's gear prior to jumping off a KC-130 Hercules aircraft. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

PHILIPPINE MARINES EMBRACED ON USS ESSEX



U.S. Marine Capt. Michael S. McDowell, target information officer with the 31st MEU, gives Philippine Marines a tour of the USS Essex as it steams toward the Republic of the Philippines for Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 2006. Photo by Lance Cpl. Raymond D. Petersen III

BY CPL. WILL LATHROP
31st MEU Public Affairs

ABOARD THE USS ESSEX – Seven Philippine Marines recently embarked the USS Essex (LHD-2) as it steamed toward the Republic of the Philippines Oct. 17 through Oct. 22 with U.S. Marines and Sailors participating in the bilateral Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 2006.



Philippine Marine Maj. Arturo G. Rojas, Marine Corps Training Center operations officer, observes as an AV-8B Harrier prepares to take off from the flight deck of the USS Essex. Photo by Lance Cpl. Raymond D. Petersen III

The Philippine Marines sailed with the U.S. servicemembers from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Amphibious Squadron 11 in order to participate in rapid response planning process (R2P2) classes and observe how Marines operate while aboard naval vessels.

“I’ve been in the Philippine Marine Corps for 27 years, and this is the first time I’ve ever had an opportunity like this,” said Lt. Col. Benjamin Asiddao, the assistant superintendent of the Philippine Marine Corps Training Center.

Asiddao was pleased to take the MEU up on its offer, and has learned a lot about U.S. expeditionary procedures and planning.

“Our intention was to walk the Philippine officers through the R2P2 from start to finish, conveying a sense of how we plan for missions,” said Capt. Michael S. McDowell, the target information officer for the MEU. “Hopefully, they’ll be able to take back something that will help them in the future.”

McDowell added that the Philippine Marines were very receptive, and very committed and driven to learning all they could, even if it didn’t all apply to their tactics.

“The MEU’s unique planning process, R2P2, is very different from how

we plan,” Asiddao explained. “The PMC is much smaller, so it doesn’t require the same amount of planning as the MEU does.”

The visitors were invited to not only ask questions during the classes, but also to provide insight and recommendations.

“The officers are very accommodating and professional, answering all of our questions and taking our input into account,” said Capt. Jessie Serbo, director of Research and Doctrine Development Unit, PMCTC.

In addition to the R2P2 training, the Philippine Marines observed AV-8B Harriers with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 (Reinforced) perform conventional launches from the USS Essex.

“My most memorable part of the trip was getting to look at the armaments on the (AH-1W Super Cobra) helicopter,” added Serbo.

McDowell commented on the positive experience it has been for both parties.

“We’ve really planted the seeds for future growth professionally and socially,” he said. “We’re gathering strengths for the common mission: the Global War on Terrorism.”

Serbo summed up the experience of the exchange of lessons learned, that the bottom line is how we all perform in combat.

“The greatest experience of all was working with brother Marines,” said Serbo.

The MEU and the Philippine Marine Corps are conducting the R2P2 training in anticipation of their ongoing and upcoming bilateral training events, Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercise 2006. The exercises are designed to improve interoperability, increase readiness and continue professional relationships between the U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces. Approximately 5,000 U.S. and Philippine military personnel will participate in the exercises.

MARINE RECON, PHILIPPINE SPECIAL FORCES JOIN IN LIVE FIRE DRILLS

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

CLARK AIR BASE, Republic of the Philippines— Deep Reconnaissance Platoon Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit trained with Philippine Marines and airmen for live-fire pistol and rifle close quarter battle qualification and training here Oct. 18.

“It gives everyone a chance to see each others’ capabilities and ensures we set a strong presence and example,” said U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Daniel Howe, a 31-year-old Kuyahoga Falls, Ohio native and 1st team leader, DRP.

For a couple of the Philippine Marines, it was the first time they trained with a pistol.

“This was my first time shooting with a (M1911A1) .45 (caliber) pistol,” said Philippine Marine Pfc. Diego Boncales, reconnaissance Marine, Force Reconnaissance Battalion. “The U.S. Marines are the best to learn from, so I’m glad they were my teachers.”

All service members fired 200-300 rounds on a short-distance firing range at distances starting at 30 yards and progressively moving to as close as 3 yards using



Philippine force reconnaissance Marines fire the M1911A1 .45 caliber pistol while U.S. recon Marines observe and assist.

both pistols and rifles.

The U.S. Marines observed their counterparts during the dry and live firing drills reinforcing the fundamentals of Marine Corps marksmanship.

“These guys see a lot of action,” said U.S. Marine Cpl. Michael Petrucci, a 20-year-old Long Island, N.Y. native and reconnaissance Marine. “Anyone in the same boat as us, as far as the fight against terrorism goes, then I’ll help teach them how to shoot – I’m all in favor of getting rid of terrorism.”

Following the live-fire drills on the short-distance courses, the service members took their focus to the “Kill House” facility. The “Kill House” is a simulated close-quarter battle site used for urban



U.S. recon Marines enter the “Kill House,” a close quarter battle training site, while Philippine Marines and airmen observe and study during live-fire training here.

warfare training.

The U.S. Marines offered their extensive training and experience in the urban combat environment to the Philippine forces for study.

“If we’re going to learn close quarter combat, I want to learn from the U.S. Marines,” said Philippine Marine Staff Sgt. Francisco Ramirez, communications chief, Force Reconnaissance Battalion. “They know what they’re doing.”

The U.S. Marines ran through the “Kill House” in several live-fire drills while the Philippine service members examined. Following the U.S. Marines’ example, the Philippine Marines and airmen ran through dry drills with the U.S. Marines to get the feel of the house.

After reaching a comfort level and understanding, both Philippine services took their turn in the house with live ammo.

31ST MEU ASSAULTS AIR FIELD, KICKS OFF PHIBLEX 2006

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Republic of the Philippines — Marines and Sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group simulated an airfield seizure marking the start of the Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 2006 here Oct. 21.

The Okinawa and Sasebo, Japan-forward-deployed American forces' participation in the bilateral exercise holds a dual-fold purpose. In one aspect, the MEU receives evaluations for its special operations capable requirements while enhancing the interoperability between U.S. and Philippine forces.

"Both our forces have numerous training objectives to accomplish and we'll accomplish them together," said U.S. Marine Col. Walter L. Miller, Jr., the MEU's commander. "Not only are we conducting events such as live fire training and amphibious landings, we will also conduct medical and engineering civic action projects near our training areas."

Approximately 4,500 U.S.

Marines and sailors will participate in the exercise making it the largest U.S.-Philippine military training exercise this year.

"Operating with the U.S. forces allows us to exchange and enhance each other's techniques, tactics and procedures," said Philippine Marine Lt. Col. Benjamin B.

Asiddao, assistant superintendent of the Philippine Marine Corps Training Center.

According to Staff Sgt. Brian K. Withrow, 2nd platoon sergeant, Company E, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, each service has much to

offer the other.

"Our Marines are able to attend some really great schools and experience very sophisticated training, which we want to share with our Philippine counterparts," said Withrow, a Susanville, Calif. native. "But it's a mutual exchange because some of my Marines haven't experienced combat, while many of the Phil-Marines have extensive experience."

The U.S. Marines simulated an assault on an airfield

here, and the Philippine Marines played the role of a defending force during the simulated firefight.

"The U.S. Marines reacted like robots," said Philippine Marine Staff Sgt. Roy T. Borgarra, sniper instructor, Philippine Marine Corps Sniper School. "They are very disciplined and have no fear of the enemy."

According to the 27-year-old Withrow, both forces' performances were commendable, and proved the fundamental elements in a Marine Corps are the same.

"What I think we, U.S. Marines, do very well is decentralize command down to the lowest possible leader," said Withrow. "We have four-man teams where the lance corporal is the one who makes important and competent decisions."



U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment simulate an assault against Philippine forces during an airfield seizure exercise here.



U.S. Marines evacuate a simulated casualty during an airfield seizure exercise.



Philippine Marines simulate defending their positions against U.S. forces during an airfield seizure exercise

U.S. MARINES OPEN THE DOOR FOR PHILIPPINE NAVY

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CPL. MARTIN R. HARRIS
31st MEU Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION SAN MIGUEL, Republic of the Philippines — Naval Station San Miguel is home to many Philippine servicemembers acquiring different naval skills, but one subject that is not in their curriculum is a hands-on lesson with the Marines Corps' P7-A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle.

Approximately 250 students from the Philippine Naval School, Naval Education and Training Command, got to experience the hardware America uses in amphibious warfare during a demonstration here Oct. 22.

The Marines of 1st Platoon, Company D, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, currently assigned to Company G, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines Regiment, of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, demonstrated the land and sea capabilities of their AAVs for the group of Philippine Sailors, made up of officer candidates and enlisted personnel receiving advanced training.

The demonstration began with Capt. Clinton Robins, Company G's commanding officer, thanking the Philip-



Nearly 250 students from the Philippine Naval School, Naval Education and Training Command, got to experience the hardware America uses in amphibious warfare during a demonstration here.

pine servicemembers for coming to learn about the how the Marine Corps attacks their enemies from the sea. He then went on to thank them for inviting the Marines to train and learn in the Philippines.

"Any time when people from different cultures and backgrounds can talk and exchange ideas, it's a great opportunity for everyone to learn," Robins said. As Marines explained the functions of the 27-ton AAVs, they told the naval students about the vehicles' ability to travel 40-50 mph for approximately 300 miles on land. The Philippine servicemembers were very interested about the vehicle's amphibious capabilities.

"Since there was a large number of officer candidates, they were most interested in the naval capabilities," said 1st Lt. Sean Thompson, the AAV's platoon commander. "The Philippine (servicemembers) here were more interested in

the AAVs than any other foreign military service that I've worked with." The Marines explained the process of ship-to-shore movement to engaging an enemy target with the M2 .50 caliber machine gun and MK-19 40mm grenade launcher mounted on the AAV's turret. After the demonstration, the

Marines invited the Philippine Sailors to explore each of the AAVs, which have the capacity to hold 21 Marines in combat gear.

Getting an up close look at the Marines equipment helped Philippine Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Rodney P. Zaldivar, a student of the basic petty officer leadership course here, to develop a bond with the U.S. Marines that he feels is important if they ever have to fight together.

"Seeing the Americans' equipment and how it is used helps us prepare to fight terrorism together," Zaldivar said. "We are very proud about the relationship we have with the American people. They treat us as brothers."

The Philippine Sailors were not the only ones benefiting from the demonstration. Cpl. Derrick Rolfo, AAV crew chief, felt the Marines received a warm welcome from an appreciative group. "It's very rewarding to be able to teach others countries about our technology," Rolfo said. "Their knowledge of our technology could definitely help us someday in combat."

By literally opening the doors of their vehicles for the naval students to learn from, the Marines of the MEU have helped to solidify the long-standing relationship between the American and Philippine militaries.



Cpl. Benjamin Martin shows Philippine Seaman Rolando B. Legados his rifle during an Amphibious Assault Vehicle demonstration here.

COMBINED RESCUE

U.S., PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES TEAM UP FOR TALON VISION'S FIRST NEO TRAINING

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

CLARK AIR BASE, Republic of the Philippines — Philippine and U.S. Armed Forces participated in noncombatant evacuation operation training for the first time in Exercise Talon Vision history using aircraft from both militaries here Oct. 22.

A noncombatant evacuation could occur when lives of noncombatant, allied personnel are endangered by war, civil unrest, or a natural disaster.

According to Philippine Air Force Maj. Allen Ballesteros, plans officer for special operations training for Tal-

on Vision, the NEO training enhances the two militaries' capabilities.

"This is the first time we've done a NEO in Talon Vision," said Ballesteros. "The opportunity allows us build on our interoperability, so if we're needed we can accomplish the task."

The two forces used five aircraft to carry out the simulated mission. A U.S. Marine KC-130 Hercules aircraft, two Philippine OV-10 Bronco gunships and two Philippine MG-520 helicopters were used to take on the job of evacuating 30 noncombatants from a simulated, compromised position.

"The planes showed up on time, and we were off the ground in less than 10 minutes," said Philippine Airman

2nd Class Ariel Moog, an simulated evacuee and security specialist with 710th Special Operations Wing. "If it were a real scenario, I know we would have been safe."

According to U.S. Marine Chief Warrant Officer J. C. Lane, aerial navigator, Marine Aerial Refueling Transport Squadron (VMGR) 152, everything went smooth.

"(The training) went exceptionally well as planned and as briefed," said Lane.

Talon Vision is designed to improve interoperability, enhance readiness and build professional relationships between U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces.



Thirty simulated evacuees rush to board a U.S. Marine KC-130 Hercules aircraft during noncombatant evacuation operation training. The training was the first NEO to take place in the Talon Vision exercise series. According to Philippine Air Force Maj. Allen Ballesteros, plans officer for special operations training in Talon Vision, the NEO training enhances the two militaries' capabilities.

ESSEX SAILORS DONATE TIME FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

COMPILED BY
USS Essex Public Affairs

OLONGAPO CITY, Republic of the Philippines

— Nearly 40 Sailors, with the USS Essex (LHD-2), gave a local elementary school, Gordon Heights Elementary School here, a makeover during a community service project Oct. 23.

The Essex was in Subic Bay Port, offloading Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit for their participation in Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercises (PHIBLEX) 2006 which afforded Essex crewmembers the opportunity to do a special project for the local community.

The community service project consisted of painting a two-story school.

"I think we did a good job," said Essex combat information center officer, Ens. Dominic Franklyn. "Obviously we have had a lot of practice painting in the last couple months," he said referring to the recent Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) period in which Essex underwent many repairs and upgrades

that included painting a large portion of the ship.

"We were able to apply those painting skills to the building and we did a pretty good job. I think you can tell the people are happy to have us, and to see their school get brightened up with a much needed paint job," Franklyn added.

Community service volunteers included not only Essex Sailors, but also personnel from Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11 and

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, who are currently embarked on the ship. They all pitched in as part of 'Team Essex' and helped paint the school.

For some of the Sailors, it was their first opportunity to visit the Philip-

pines. "I had never been to the Philip-

pines before and wanted a chance to see the culture off base, see how the people lived and what the customs were like," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class Anthony J. Melendezdiaz. "I also wanted to help the kids out. Now that I have one of my own, I know how important that is," he said.

Essex chaplain, Lt. Rean C. Enriguez, felt the community service project accomplished its goal of help-

ing the local community.

"You can see that it was successful because of the positive attitude and spirit of our Sailors," said Enriguez. "All of us came together and did a wonderful job."

Essex is the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious assault ship, and is the flagship for PHIBRON 11.



USS Essex Sailors paint a two-story elementary school during the ship's Community Relations Project here. Nearly 40 U.S. sailors volunteered to help beautify Gordon Heights Elementary School. Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Marvin E. Thompson Jr.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Daniel T. Drake, with the USS Essex, paints a wall during a Community Relations Project here. Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Marvin E. Thompson Jr.

U.S., PHILIPPINE SERVICE MEMBERS GIVE BACK TO LOCAL COMMUNITY

COMPILED BY
31st MEU Public Affairs

CAPAS, TARLAC, Philippines – U.S. and Philippine service members provided basic medical and dental care to nearly 2,000 Philippine citizens at two military-sponsored Medical Civic Affairs Projects held during the bilateral exercises Talon Vision and Amphibious Landing Exercise here.

Navy Corpsmen with Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and III Marine Expeditionary Force Special Operations Training Group, worked with Philippine military medics and local civilian dentists to provide basic health care for local Philippine citizens.

Navy Lt. Vincent Grimm, the MSSG-31's on-site commander, said the events primarily focused on basic care. The doctors, dentists, and corpsmen were limited

to basic procedures because all the medical equipment was carried ashore by the corpsmen themselves. However, most of the conditions were easily taken care of with basic medical procedures.

"We dealt with a lot of sick children and skin problems," Grimm said. "There was one elderly lady who broke her wrist about a month ago and she had not gotten it taken care of. We set and splinted it for her."

American and Philippines corpsmen and doctors worked side-by-side to take care of the nu-

merous patients waiting for care. Some personnel used the training to learn from their more experienced counterparts.

"Projects such as these provide opportunities for U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces to work and train together while improving the well being of the people in the communities they serve," said Col. Walter L. Miller, Jr., the commanding officer of the 31st MEU.



U.S. and Philippine forces issued basic medical supplies during two different MEDCAPs for local citizens. This two MEDCAPs held during Talon Vision and PHIBLEX 2006 were sponsored by U.S. and Philippine forces. Photo by Sgt. Ronoldson G. Slim

Three local children were excited to see Americans and had fun while waiting to receiving basic medical and dental care. Photo by Sgt. Ronoldson G. Slim



U.S. Navy dental personnel extracted numerous non-restorable teeth during two different MEDCAP's that provided basic medical and dental care to more than 1300 patients. Photo by Sgt. Ronoldson G. Slim



U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. John C. Williams extracts a tooth from a local girl, Jackielou Estansuro, at Camp O'Donnell Oct. 30. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho



U.S. Navy Lt. Jason Daily and Philippine Army Pfc. Juvy Villanueva perform an evaluation to Ronie Julian, 12, at Camp O'Donnell Oct. 30. Two medical civic action projects, the other held in Barangay Santa Juliana Oct. 23, brought basic medical and dental care nearly 2,000 citizens. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho



Two-year-old Rainier Sabado waits in his mother's arms before being seen by U.S. and Philippine military physicians at Camp O'Donnell Oct. 30. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

U.S., PHILIPPINE FORCES TEAM UP FOR COMREL



The Commanding Officer of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Col. Walter L. Miller Jr., hands out computers to the students of Santa Lucia High School Oct. 24. The computers were donated to the school as part of a Community Relations Project with the Philippine people. *Photo by Lance Cpl. W. Zach Griffith*

COMPILED BY
31st MEU Public Affairs

Republic of the Philippines -- Marines and Sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group along with Philippine Marines and soldiers joined together in an effort to improve several Philippine schools here.

The services coordinated the Community Relations Projects throughout their bilateral training exercises in order to enhance relations.

Along with many buildings' beautification, the MEU donated computers and other school materials on behalf of the U.S. military for Filipino students.



The Maragondon Elementary School in Cavite, recieved new school supplies during a community relations project Oct. 28. The school also benefitted from a Engineering Civic Action Project. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Raymond D. Petersen III*



Lance Corporal Daisy Valencia paints the outside of one of Santa Lucia High School's classrooms Oct. 28 in Tarlac province, Philippines. *Photo by Lance Cpl. W. Zach Griffith*



U.S. Marines help to distribute school supplies and computers at Sapang Uno Elementary in Ternate, Cavite Oct. 28. The Community Relations Project was part of the bilateral training evolution PHIBLEX 2006. *Courtesy Photo by Val Rodriguez*



Students with Sapang Uno Elementary, Ternate National High School and its annex attend a turnover ceremony of computers and school supplies by the Marines and Sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Oct. 28. As part of PHIBLEX 2006, the MEU donated computers and school supplies to four schools in Tarlac and Cavite provinces. *Photo by Raymond D. Petersen III*

(Right) U.S. Marine Cpl. Scott J. Garrett, cannoneer with Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, instructs Philippine Marines on M198 Towed Howitzer operation. (Below) U.S. Marines with I Btry., instruct Philippine Marines on their standard operating procedures.



ROUNDS DOWN RANGE

U.S., PHILIPPINE ARTILLERY MARINES TRAIN TOGETHER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. MIKE CAMACHO
31st MEU Public Affairs

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Republic of the Philippines — Philippine and U.S. artillery Marines recently conducted live-fire training in order to develop a strong familiarization of each service's function during part of the bilateral Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) here Oct. 26. Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, currently attached to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit was part of the 4,500 U.S. service members participating in PHIBLEX 2006.

According to Philippine Marine 1st Lt. Etrobal B. Laborte, officer in charge of Provisionary Artillery Battery, 17th Marine Company, the Philippine Marines use an older version of the Howitzer artillery canon, but the fundamentals shared were insightful.

"They use extra careful safety measures that we can apply to our (standard operational procedures)," said the 28-year-old Laborte. "We're really learning a lot from our counterparts, and we will use this to enhance our proficiency and

combat readiness."

The U.S. Marines ran through a step-by-step dry fire Oct. 25 using one of their Marines to translate. U.S. Marine Cpl. Carl Marquez, a cannoneer with I Btry., was born in the Philippines and speaks the native language, Tagalog, fluently. "He can do his job very well, and he translates that," said Philippine Marine Tech. Sgt. Romeo T. Mulina, fire direction center chief, PAB. The dry-fire demonstration and translation helped the Philippine artillery Marines prepare to observe and participate in the live-fire training. According to Capt. John G. Lehane, commanding officer of I Btry., the step-by-step training gave the Philippine Marines a good look at how the battery operates. "Throughout the (dry-fire) training, (the Philippine Marines) were really attentive," said Lehane. "They said they were interested in upgrading their current weapons to what we are using."

The U.S. Marines staged their M198 155 mm Towed Howitzers in a somewhat unfamiliar terrain—the jungle with the assistance of the Philippine Marines.



U.S. and Philippine artillery Marines work together in staging ammunition for a M198 155mm Towed Howitzer during the live-fire set up. The Marine counterparts exchanged their tactics, techniques and procedures in order to develop a strong familiarization with each other.

"There is so much more than just firing the weapons," said U.S. Marine Sgt. Victor Gonzalezaguirre, a gun section chief with I Btry. "There is a lot of coordination that goes into setting up. (Artillery Marines) are known to work hard, and the Philippine Marines didn't skip a beat."

According to Laborte, the live-fire was fun and exciting, but more than that they learned a lot.

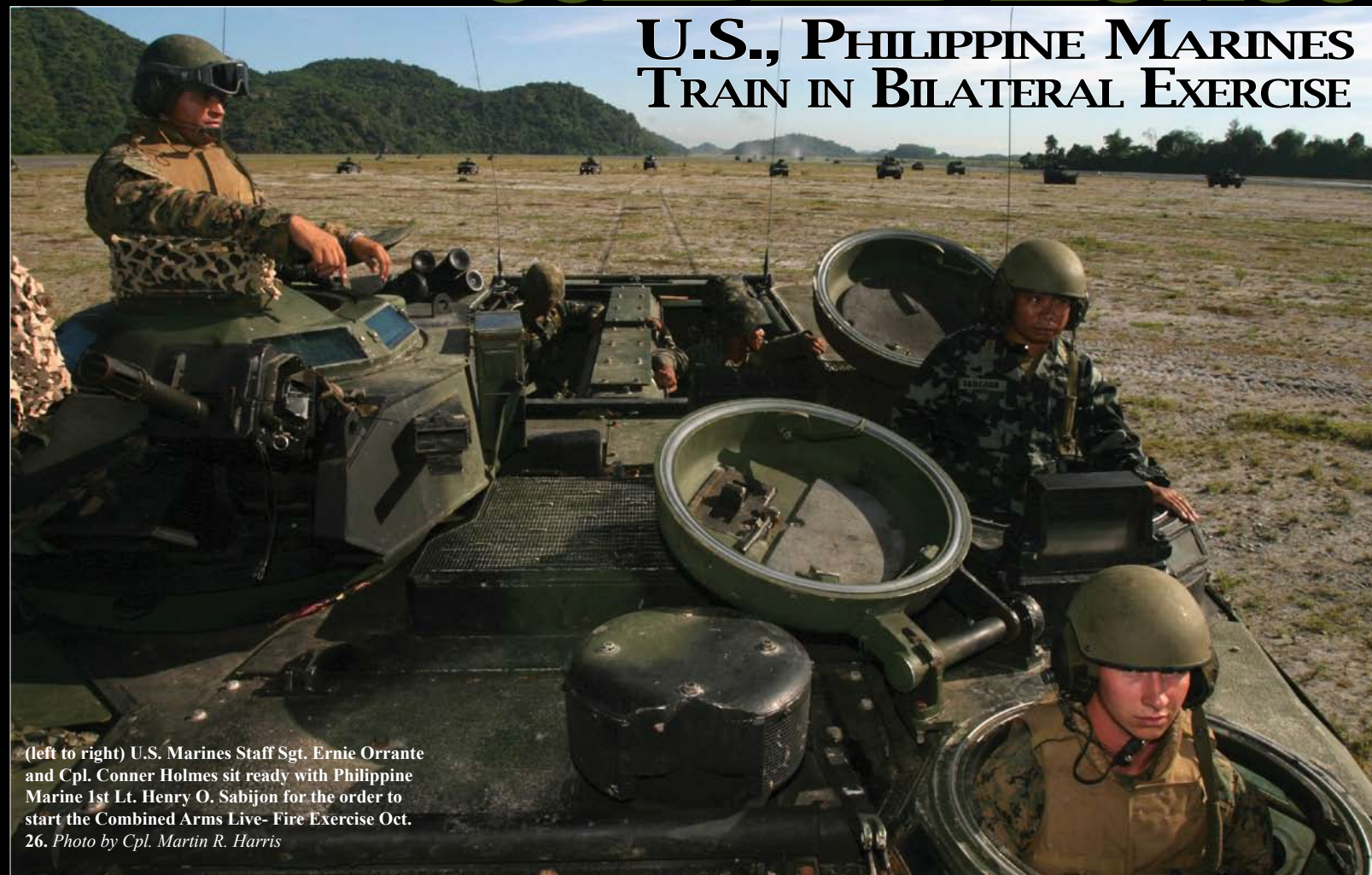


(Above) U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Enoch D. Pashby, a cannoneer with I Btry., 3/11, BLT 2/4, pulls the firing lanyard during live-fire training. (Below) A Philippine Marine fires a round from a M198 155mm Towed Howitzer.



COMBINED TACTICS

U.S., PHILIPPINE MARINES TRAIN IN BILATERAL EXERCISE



(left to right) U.S. Marines Staff Sgt. Ernie Orrante and Cpl. Conner Holmes sit ready with Philippine Marine 1st Lt. Henry O. Sabijon for the order to start the Combined Arms Live-Fire Exercise Oct. 26. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris

By CPL. MARTIN R. HARRIS
31st MEU Public Affairs

CROW VALLEY, Republic of the Philippines — Warriors from both the U.S. and Philippine Marine Corps came together during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise at the Crow Valley training range here Oct. 26.

Using Assault Amphibious Vehicles, the Marines of Company G, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, currently attached to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, used the bilateral training as an opportunity to hone their skills in tactical movement and mechanized warfare, as well as show the Philippine Marine Corps' 22nd Marine Co., 2nd Marine BLT, the tactics Marines use.

“Mechanized assault and supporting areas of fire are something the Philippine Marines don’t get a lot of opportunity to do,” said Capt. Clinton Robins, commanding officer of G Co. “They are more geared to small unit operations and operating in the jungle fighting guerilla units or terrorists.”

The plan of attack for the training mission concentrated fire on three different enemy positions, simulated to be platoons of mechanized assets.

The 22nd Marine Co., transported

by U.S. AAVs, was responsible for assaulting, securing and setting up a support-by-fire position on objective alpha, a small hill in the middle of Crow Valley.

Company G and Mobile Assault Co., also with BLT 2/4, then moved in a parallel formation on the left and right of the secured objective alpha until they reached a fence blocking their path to objective bravo.

The force set up support-by-fire positions as U.S. and Philippine Marine engineers used a linear mine clearance kit to breach the fence to allow 1st Platoon, G Co. to assault objective bravo.

After securing objective bravo, the Philippine Marines poured through the breach to assault objective charlie.

Though much of the Marines’ time during the training was spent cramped into AAVs – bouncing over uneven terrain – Robins hoped to teach them the importance of support positions.

“From the squad leader position on down it is very important for the

Marines to understand the importance of executing a fire support plan,” Robins said. “Supporting areas of fire are also extremely important when using mechanized vehicles.”

According to Philippine Marine 1st Lt. Henry O. Sabijon, commanding officer of the 22nd Marine Co., the exercise not only helped the Philippine Marines gain important familiarization

with the operations and movements of mechanized warfare, but it also gave the Marines from different countries an opportunity to learn about each other and build a lasting relationship.

“It’s very important for the U.S. Marines and the Philippine Marines to be familiar with one another,” said Sabijon. “We have many of the same goals of fighting against anti-democratic governments and terrorist regimes.”

The new type of training was accepted very well by the Philippine Marines, although it was much different than they were used to, explained Sabijon.

“Training with the (AAVs) taught us how to man and operate them if needed,” said Sabijon.

The training was part of Amphibious Landing Exercise 2006, a bilateral exercise with the Armed Forces of the Philippines that improves interoperability, increases readiness, and improves professional relationships between the U.S. and Philippine militaries.



Philippine Marine Pfc. Hermogenes Lumbres provides security at an objective here Oct. 26. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris



Lt. Col. James F. Glynn, commanding officer of BLT 2/4, 31st MEU, briefs Armed Forces of the Philippines senior officers prior at the Combined Arms Live-Fire Exercise Oct. 26. Photo by Cpl. Will Lathrop



Marines participating in the CALFEX blow a linear mine clearance kit here Oct. 26. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris



Philippine Marines from the 22nd Marine Company, 2nd Marine Battalion Landing Team, provide security around an assault amphibious vehicle at objective charlie during the CALFEX here Oct. 26. The bilateral training gave members of the 22nd Marine Co. an opportunity to experience the way the U.S. Marine Corps operate in mechanized warfare. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris

U.S., PHILIPPINE FORCES PARTNER UP TO LEND HELPING HAND



A Marine engineer used a saw to slice through the rusty bolts holding the old roof to the rafters.

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL. W. ZACH GRIFFITH
31st MEU Public Affairs

MARAGONDON, CAVITE, Republic of the Philippines - Twelve U.S. Marines and Sailors with Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group-31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, combined manpower with Philippine Marines for an Engineering Civic Action Project here Oct. 26 through 30.

The U.S. engineers along with the Philippine engineers replaced a school's roof. They also recovered the school's driveway and repainted some of the classrooms.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Kevin C. Hardy, engineering detachment chief, the roof is

the main project because it has the potential to cause the most problems in the future.

"The roof was made of tin which had rusted through," Hardy said. "It leaked when it rained, and it would get a lot worse if we did not replace it. Some of the wooden rafters had begun to rot, so we will replace those as well."

The day before the project began, local residents

welcomed the combat engineers with open generosity, offering the Marines water, soda, and assorted crackers and cookies.

"I think their greeting showed how much they appreciate us being here," said 1st Lt. Grissett Gideon, the MSSG-31 engineers' platoon commander.

The replacement began with tearing off the old, rusted tin roof, and removing the feeble wooden rafters. The U.S. Marine engineers worked side by side with two volunteers from the Philippine Marine Corps of Engineers.

The Marines worked under the blazing sun to tear off the old roof. The old sheets were secured to the rafters with rusted bolts

that had to be cut off with an electric circular saw.

The sparks from the shorn metal bounced around the engineers who were sweating in the heat, prying the corroded nails loose from the dry wood and rusty tin. Even laboring under the sun, the U.S. and Philippine Marines understood why and what they were doing.

According to U.S. Marine Cpl. Nathan Sparks, an MSSG-31 maintenance detachment welder, it was a very satisfying feeling knowing he was making a difference for people who really needed it.

Gideon explained why they had chosen to replace the roof of the school as their main project.

"We were given three days to complete the project," she said. "So we picked a project we could do that would make the most impact in the time we were given. The current roof leaked when it rained, and, in the time we were given, we figured we could fix that."

The sun had begun to set in the sky when the roof lay bare, ready for the new covering. The engineers were not done for the day. While they waited for the materials to finish the roofing job, they set to work tearing and replacing one of the dilapidated walls that separated two of the

classrooms.

During the second day of construction it began to rain heavily. The engineers scrambled in the mud to put a temporary cover over the roof's shell and keep the classrooms dry.

The engineers worked well into the dark, working against the time limit given to them.

The following day the 31st MEU chaplain, Lt. Cmdr. Myung Kim, arrived with Philippine Marine Maj. Melvin Ordiales, a civil-military operations officer with the Philippine Marine Headquarters, carrying a load of backpacks to donate to the children of the school.

"We are from the United States Marine Corps," said Kim in his speech to the small crowd that had gathered at the school. "We bring school supplies to give to the children because we love you."

The children lined up and received the supply-stuffed backpacks.



Philippine Marine Sgt. Bailio R. Uban, an engineer with the Philippine Marine Corps of Engineers, strains as he pries loose a section of the old roof. Photo by Lance Cpl. W. Zach Griffith

U.S. NAVY EMBARKS PHILIPPINE MARINES



U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Stephen C. McClure, a Combat Rubber Raiding Craft coxswain with the 31st MEU, instructs Philippine Marines on proper CRRC techniques Oct. 28 inside the well deck of the USS Juneau (LPD-10). The 31st MEU and the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group embarked the Philippine Marines Oct. 27 in preparation for a combined amphibious landing.

STORY AND PHOTO BY
JOURNALIST SEAMAN ADAM R. COLE
Task Force 76 Public Affairs

ABOARD USS ESSEX (LHD-2), Republic of the Philippines - Ships of the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group performed amphibious backload operations Oct. 27 as part of Amphibious Landing Exercise 2006, bringing back some special embarks along with the Marines of 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

USS Essex (LHD-2), USS Juneau (LPD-10) and USS Fort McHenry (LSD-43) embarked two companies of Philippine Marines, approximately 100 in all during the backload operations.

"We've taught them everything from vehicle maintenance techniques to crisis action planning and in turn we have learned jungle warfare and survival skills from the Philippine Marines, who are among the best in the world at that style of fighting," said Marine Capt. Daniel S. Price, assistant operations officer and Philippine liaison.

The training is an annual bilateral Republic of the Philippines and United States exercise designed to improve

interoperability, increase readiness and continue professional relationships between the United States and Philippine Armed Forces (AFP).

"Having the Philippine Marines here strengthens the Blue-Green team and our ability to conduct operations safely and efficiently," said Capt. Mark E. Donahue, commodore, Amphibious Squadron 11, the operational commander of the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group based out of Sasebo, Japan. "The powerful teamwork that we have established during this training increases our operational potential in supporting and maintaining the peace and stability of the Asian-Pacific region."

The bilateral training component has been an important piece for both sides, according to 31st MEU and AFP Marines. Both have taught each other important lessons and built camaraderie that will last a lifetime.

"This is very helpful," said Philippine Marine 1st Lt. Clifford Bosco with 2nd Marine Battalion Landing Team. "Best of all, we like the camaraderie of being with other Marines. We greatly appreciated the training and

enjoyed it very much."

The 31st MEU Marines had similarly good comments about the AFP personnel and training.

"They came out with a lot of energy and gave us insight into wilderness operations that we didn't have a lot of experience with," said Staff Sgt. Robert Foreman, the platoon sergeant of 3rd Platoon, Company F, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine of the 31st MEU.

Now, the Marines of both countries will work together, using the 3-ship Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) to conduct amphibious landing operations, which is a coordinated ship to shore movement of personnel, equipment and supplies using a variety of aircraft and amphibious landing crafts.

"We have learned a lot from the U.S. Marines," said Philippine Marine Sgt. Rogellio M. Capilitan Jr. "We have to always be ready. No matter what the challenge."

Essex, Juneau and Fort McHenry are based out of Sasebo, Japan, and part of the Navy's only Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group.

(center) Philippine and U.S. Marines say goodbye to each other after the amphibious assault landing here Oct. 29. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris (below) U.S. and Philippine Marines ride a Combat Rubber Raiding Craft, 18 total, to move from ship to shore as part of the amphibious assault landing exercise. Photo by Journalist Seaman Adam R. Cole (bottom) An AH-1W Super Cobra simulates an attack during amphibious assault training with the Philippine Marine Corps. Photo by Lance Cpl. Raymond D. Petersen III



COMPILED BY
31st MEU Public Affairs

MARINE BASE TERNATE, Republic of the Philippines – Marines and Sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Sailors with the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group along with Philippine Marines with 2nd Marine Battalion Landing Team, conducted an amphibious assault landing for the final bilateral training portion of Amphibious Landing Exercise 2006, Oct. 29.



Philippine Marine Pfc. Wilson M. Tablit provides security for his squad. Photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris

Numerous dignitaries and Philippine government officials were invited to observe the capstone event, including senators, and the current and



U.S. Marines storm the beach using LAVs. Photo by Lance Cpl. Raymond D. Petersen III



A Landing Craft, Air Cushion moves troops from ship to shore during the amphibious assault landing exercise here. Photo by Raymond D. Petersen

former commandants of the Philippine Marine Corps.

The event began with a short briefing by the joint exercise battalion commanders explaining to the guests how the assault would take place and where the different assault elements would approach.

Marine AV-8B Harriers, AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 (Reinforced) kicked off the simulated assault by making air strikes against the hostile beaches. Shortly thereafter, Philippine Marines in Combat Raid Rubber Crafts raced onto the beach and moved up a hill towards their simulated objective.

Simultaneously, Marines with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Battalion Landing Team, 31st MEU, rode their CRRCs onto an adjacent beach over, securing it as their landing site.

According to Capt. Clinton Robins, commanding officer of G Co., amphibious assault training is a valuable part of the Marine Corps arsenal.

“Amphibious assaults are the bread-and-butter of the Marine Corps and always worthwhile training, especially when we get to the opportunity to train with other countries,” said Robins. “Beach assaults like this are also important because they help us get familiar with our Navy brethren.”

Landing Craft, Air Cushion vehicles brought to shore light-armored vehicles that proceeded to move off of the beach and secure even more beach for the landing force.

Amphibious Assault Vehicles brought U.S. and Philippine Marines ashore to push through any obstacles on the west end of the assault site.

In order to provide extra security from the high ground, Marines with E Co. fast-roped from CH-46E Sea Knights onto a ridge over-

looking the LCACs.

The visiting dignitaries attended a closing ceremony for PHIBLEX after the assault was finished, officially ending the exercise.

Vice Adm. Ernesto De Leon, flag officer-in-command of the Philippine Navy and the guest of honor, spoke during the ceremony, noting the success of the bilateral training.

“This exercise is truly a testament of the strength of joint operations,” he said.

The Philippine PHIBLEX exercise director, Col. “Rusty” Guerrero, also spoke about the past two weeks of training.

“This has been an example of the training vision of the Philippine Marine Corps,” Guerrero said, “and we have been honored to have trained hand-in-hand with our brothers from across the sea.”

De Leon agreed, “I believe this exercise has been a promotion of shared interests in freedom and democracy.”

“The definition of training is success in battle, and this has been very successful training,” he said.

After the ceremony, the Philippine Marines said goodbye to their American brothers-in-arms and thanked them for their professionalism and friendship.

“We hope that this training has helped strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and America,” said Philippine Marine 1st Lt. Henry O. Sabijon, commanding officer of the 22nd Marine Co., 2nd Marine BLT, to the U.S. Marines after the training ended. “Thank you all for treating us as your brothers, and may God bless you.”

The Amphibious Landing Exercise 2006 is a bilateral training event strengthening ties and interoperability between the U.S. and the Philippine militaries. The U.S. and Philippine militaries will continue to strengthen their military-to-military ties in order to maintain a unified force in the Global War on Terrorism.

SPLASH DOWN, WRAP UP

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT LANDING COMPLETES PHIBLEX

